

Salvation Completed:

And SECURED in

C H R I S T,

AS THE

COVENANT of the PEOPLE.

Considered in

A Discourse on that Subject.

By JAMES RELLY.

Wrote in the Year 1753.

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L O N D O N:

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Salvation Completed :

And give thee for a Covenant of the People, &c. Isaiah xlii. 9.

GOD, and *Man*, who by reason of Sin, appeared to be at an infinite distance from each other, are brought together by Covenant relation in *Christ Jesus*.

This *covenant*, or *agreement*, is that ; wherein they mutually undertake, to perform punctually the condition required on the part of each ; that their contract might be legally valid, and without exception.

The person, given for a covenant of the People, is *Jesus Christ* : the parties, agreeing, or covenanting in him, are *God*, and *man* : whose covenant, consists in the unity of two natures, but one person, in our mysterious *Emmanuel* or *God with us* : where the offended, and offending natures, meeting together in covenant, make but one *Christ*, who is upon *that account* with propriety, called the Covenant of the People.

God, in all the fulness of his perfections, in the person of the Word, or divine nature of *Jesus*; and the people in all the fulness of their number, misery and imperfection in the man who is God's fellow, or the *human* nature of *Christ*; (thro' the alone love and good will of God towards men) peacefully met together in the God-man; who, hath taken into himself, the fulness of both natures, in the unity of one person thus becoming the covenant of the people.

The conditions, required of each party to be performed, for the validity of this covenant, and that it might be unexceptionable, are fulfilled in the same; as it consists in the personal oneness of both natures; there, God has made his demand of perfect obedience, according to the tenor of the law, without which he could not in justice justify man. And there, Man, as the party to whom the law was given, has perfectly answered its demands, that the gift of salvation, might not be injurious to the law. In this covenant, God, as a just judge, hath actually executed, what he threatened upon the breach of his law: which was *death*, appointed as the wages of sin. It was here, the soul that sinned died: for as *Jesus* when passing by the Angels that fell, took upon him the seed of *Abraham*, the mystical constitution of his humanity, was fallen man: who are therefore considered as members of his

his Body, of his flesh, and of his bone : in this sense, the soul that sinned was punished in his suffering nature ; when he was made sin for us, by taking hold of our fallen nature, his collected, mystical body the Church, and also, by taking into that nature, the fulness of our guilt, sin, and curse : that he, being numbered among transgressors, might become for his children, the one public sinner: when he was speechless under the accusation of our crimes, and bare the chastisement of our peace, and was made a curse for us. Thus did he purge our sin, by his own blood and sacrifice, when he took the fulness of it into himself, until he had healed us by his stripes: we being in his Body through the whole of his doing and suffering, as members thereof.

And, as the *human* nature through obedience and suffering, in this covenant ; has perfectly performed the conditions required on its part ; it will also appear, that God has performed *his*, according to his promise: where he says, *I will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee, for a covenant of the people, &c.* He, was to capacitate the humanity, or suffering nature of Jesus, to make atonement for sin, and to seal the covenant by his blood : and this was done where that humanity through the whole of his obedience to death, had its subsistence in the Deity. The human nature of *Christ* hath no personal subsistence

sistance in itself, considered a-part, or distinct
 from the deity ; as all his *creatures* hath, but
 the personal subsistence, of the Holy *Jesus*,
 being in his Godhead, and not in his Huma-
 nity, all his words, and works, are cloathed
 with infinitude : all his obedience, temptati-
 ons, poverty, afflictions, all the agonies, un-
 known sorrows, bruises, wounds, and bloody
 death of his suffering nature, was in that per-
 sonal subsistence, which he had in his God-
 head : therefore, was he, as truly God, as
 man, through all his humbled steps. Hence
 it is, that there is no part of his obedience,
 suffering, or death, but what is pregnant with
 the inconceivable merit, of his eternal power
 and Godhead. His bloodshedding, was in
 the merit, impassibility, and eternity of his
 Godhead. Therefore it is true that God has
purchased the church with his own blood. The
 death of his suffering nature, was in the life,
 love, and immortality of his Godhead : There-
 fore it is true that God has *laid down his life*
for us. The despised, shameful, bloody form
 in which he was exposed, was in the ineffable
 beauties and glory of his Godhead. There-
 fore, was it the *Lord of Glory* who was cru-
 cified. All his weakness, was in the strength,
 and power of his Godhead, therefore is it
 called the *weakness of God*. All the foolishness
 of his cross, was in the infinite, and unsearch-
 able wisdom of his Godhead : Therefore, is
 it *that the foolishness of God, is wiser than men*,
 Thus

Thus, his every stripe, and pain, and rack, and torment, or falling clod of blood, or pearly sweat, has all the riches, value, power and merit of his Godhead in it: whilst the conditions required on either part are, fulfilled in the covenant: and all the mercies of it made sure to *David*, and his seed. It is in the faithful view of this Gospel, we can justify the most impartial justice, in acquitting the prisoner, and bringing him out of the pit, by the blood of the covenant. This deep contrivance loudly speaks the wisdom of God, *who has known his mind, or who hath been his counsellor?* but where was the obligation or what necessity was the eternal mind under, to give this gift to man, this covenant to sinful people? Lo! here we see eternal *mercy* stoop, with condescension, to save a ruin'd race. Unmerited, unthought of, undeserved, it comes to us. Oh! *mercy* darling theme, in heaven, and favourite anthem of the just. *Mercy*, triumphant attribute; built up through time, and to eternity. *Mercy*, O 'tis of thee, that we are not consumed: thou art, the helpless sinners daily plea, and shalt be mine, till with my latest breath, my soul wafts to eternity.

David said, the Lord had made with him an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: this corresponds with the foregoing description of the covenant: for when
through

through faith we understand our membership, in the body of the Lord, we know that God hath made a covenant with us in *Christ Jesus*: in *general*, as a body composed of many members, and in *particular*, as distinct members of the same body: the perpetuity of which covenant is secured in that indissoluble union, between two natures, God and Man, in one Lord *Christ*: and every believer, having faith for himself in this Gospel, can say with *David*, the Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which is all my hope, and all my salvation.

In this covenant, our nature laid waste by sin, and once a barren wilderness, is now become a fruitful field. Once a pricking thorn, but now the true vine: of which we are the branches. Whilst the eternal Father is the great husbandman; who has in this covenant union, cultivated this once barren wilderness, our spoiled nature: when the plowers, plowed *Messiah's* back, making long and bloody furrows. It is in this covenant, our nature, which was the vessel marred between the potter's hands, is now made another, and a nobler vessel. In our first original, we were a little lower than the angels, yea, the lowest of the intelligent beings; but to *us*, when sinking, has God reached out the hand of love and power, and passing by more glorious natures, has taken *us* on himself: raising

us to such an eminence, that *when he brought in his first begotten son into the world, he commanded all the Angels of God to worship him.*

In this cōvenant, our nature is raised from the dunghill to a glorious throne : Angels admiring, adoring, and willingly flying to execute his commands : whilst we, who were without strength, possess omnipotence, in our exalted Head : who now, having all power in heaven and earth, committed to his hand ; and the government of providence, and grace, laid upon his shoulders ; with steadfastness holds the reins thereof, over every world : and in infinite wisdom, and love, unspeakable to man ; moves all the wheels from the greatest, to the most minute dispensation thereof.

In this covenant, the *spirit* is given, and infused, to all the seed : where the holy anointing, in its unmeasurable fulness, was poured upon our honourable and holy Head, *Jesus* ; which comes down to the skirts of his cloathing, even to the weakest, and meanest member of his body. *The spirit of the Lord God being upon him, anointing him, to preach good tydings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; and all this he has perfectly wrought, thro' the salvation of our nature in himself : where, he has given*

us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, making us trees of righteousness, the plants of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

In this covenant, we overcome the accuser of the brethren, and know the communion of saints, in the unity of the body. This testimony, mixed with faith to them that hear, proves that prophecy, which moves the dry bones, bringing bone to its bone, until the hope of the house of *Israel* is revived. And is that word, which is spirit and life, to all the holy seed: who are naturally dead in trespasses and sin. Nor is this mystery hidden from the followers of the lamb, *the secret of the Lord is with such that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.*

Having shewn, that *Jesus* is this covenant, I proceed, in discoursing of the fulness of grace, and glory, laid up in him, as our inheritance.

First, In *Christ* our covenant, we have life: this is valuable, all that a man hath will he give for his life. We are represented, as being dead in trespasses and sin, by nature: without hope, and without God in the world. But, the scriptures assure us, that in *Jesus* we have life, *God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his son.* Hence is it, the saviour saith, *because*

because I live, you shall live also. The head and the body have but one life. It is now the alone concern of a christian man, to know that *Jesus* lives. It is also, that sufficiency of comfort, and support, which he affords to his saints, in the greatest distress: *I am he that was dead, but am alive, and lives far ever.* It is that assurance which a christian hath, that he can never be lost. For, *if when sinners, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his son, much more now, being reconciled; we shall be saved by his life.* When *Jesus* arose from the dead on the third morning, and shewed himself alive to many witnesses; there appeared to the spiritual eye, his beloved Bride, in the perfection of beauty: even, all his mystical members, *quicken'd together with him.* This the holy scriptures sufficiently teach, *and you hath he quicken'd, together with Christ,* saith the Apostle: of this also, the Prophet spake, when he said, *thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body, shall they arise.* The life of *Jesus* is the believer's life, not only as he lives *for* him, as mediator of the new covenant; nor only as he lives *in* him, by the revelation of his spirit; but as he lives *in himself* an unchangeable life, and that which hath no end: in this life of his, we live, according to the Apostle: *ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God:* with his humanity, in all the fulness of the perfection of his Godhead; which, being all

engaged for the final preservation of our life, proves the *fountain* and *security* of it, to all who are members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones. That, indissolvable union between God and man, in the person of *Christ*, being the sure, and certain pledge, of this our security, whilst all who know their membership in the body of *Christ*, know what it is to live in his life. As the first *Adam* was made a living soul, and by his sin brought death upon *his* posterity, so the second *Adam* was made a quickening spirit, in whom all *his* seed are quickened and live, as they died in the former: The Church, being mystically quickened, in the resurrection of the body of *Christ*, which was sown a natural body, but raised a spiritual body; he *having died for us, that whether we sleep, or wake, we might live together with him.* To this purpose, most excellent are the words, in the communion office of the church of England: the body of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul, unto everlasting life. That once crucified, but now ever-living Body, of God our Saviour, preserves and secures our eternal life in its own: as the branch in the vine, or the exterior parts of the natural body are preserved, as living members, and live in the fountain life of the body: so all his children, as members of his body, live in the life, and unity of the same. Hence is
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it, with propriety, he is called *our life*: and this character he bears as a living saviour; in whose life we live. This word mixed with faith, is the revelation of the son of God in our hearts, and proves through the operation of his spirit, that quickening power which raises us in our minds, from the ruins of sin and death, to that lively hope of immortality, and eternal life which is brought to light in the gospel. This is *Christ in us the hope of glory*: this is *Christ* dwelling in our hearts by faith: where the life and conquest of *his* humanity, is become the living food of every believer, in *his* flesh and blood, which is meat indeed, and drink indeed; and this feeding is in the heart by faith, where we discern, and feel such a relation to his flesh and blood, that his sacrifice, death, life, victories, triumphs, honour, and glory are all our own: and we rejoice in it, and are enriched in it, with the fulness of grace, and glory, and eternal life; and thus is it, we eat his flesh and drink his blood: the faith and meditation of it, being of the same nourishment to our mind and spirit, as meat and drink to the natural body. He having taken part of our flesh and blood, is not ashamed to call us brethren: and here we follow the Apostle's direction, reckoning ourselves *indeed dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*: thus having eternal life in *Christ* our covenant.

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This life is the gift of God, who hath given us his own son; *he that hath the son hath life*; such as hath not been produced, merited, nor deserved by us; neither does it depend upon any condition to be performed by us, for the continuation of it, but rests alone upon the life of *Jesus*. That peace, comfort and satisfaction, which this doctrine affords, flows from a steadfast belief in the heart, without fear or doubting, that the man *Jesus*, who was crucified without the gates of *Jerusalem*, died upon a cross, and was buried, is risen again; and now lives. This, is enough for us to know, since it is in *his* life, *we* live: accepted, in *his* acceptance; pure and free, in *his* purity, and freedom; exalted in *his* righteousness, and in *his* glory glorified. I speak not this to that meer traditional or historical assent, which is given in the world, to the death and resurrection of the holy *Jesus*; but I testify of this peace and joy in believing, to the faith of the operation of God, which is his gift to them that believe: and to them, again would I say, that as the perpetuity of this life in its fountain, is not dependant upon any condition performed by them, but upon the triumphant life of the lamb of God alone: to this life of his are we at all times to look, for strength, for acceptance with God, and for certainty of eternal salvation; and not to look for these things, to any measure of know-

knowledge, or enjoyment, which we might have of it in the stream; as in *ourselves* nor to any habit, or worth, wrought *in us*, or *by us*, through such an enjoyment. Therefore, let the eye be stedfastly fixed upon *the* life of *Jesus*, and the heart be intirely satisfied *in it*, as our own; in all its glory, and unchangeableness: then shall we have a sufficiency of support: under all our trials, and afflictions, whilst here; and shall set to our seals that he is true, where he hath said, *because I live you shall live also*. Let all know, that this life is unchangeable: because *Jesus Christ* is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*. It is also eternal: for in that he died once, he dieth no more: but being alive, liveth for-ever. Of this, we cannot be deprived: because *Jesus* liveth. This is the life that can never fail, whilst he is alive. This life, is hidden from the face of the enemy: hidden in the glory of God; where his faithfulness, justice, love, and power, is engaged to support it, and to secure it from every invader, yea from all that seek its ruin: In this, let us therefore be glad and rejoice, with exceeding great joy. This life, has no infirmity attending it: nor, shall length of days, no, nor eternal ages, ever impair its health, or cause us to loath it. But, in its full bloom, and youthful vigour, shall it remain, when sun, moon, and stars shall fail, and pass away. Nor, can its unchanging duration
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be measured, but, by endless days, by the eternity of God himself. And our God assures us, that a moment of it, shall not pass, without a fulness of joy, and pleasure, forever more. Glory be to God on high, *when Christ, who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory.*

Secondly, We have righteousness in this covenant. The holy scriptures, experience, and common observation, jointly testify, that man is far gone from original righteousness: or, that we have lost the divine rectitude of nature, in which we were created. That, our nature once was pure is apparent, from the Fountain of purity himself: when, viewing the work of his hands, he pronounced it very good. And, that it is now unrighteous, and impure, is as evident; from the same lip of truth who hath declared the imaginations of man's heart, to be evil continually: *all having sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* Nature also teaches, that mankind is contrary, in habit, and action, to what it conceives of God: this sound is gone to the ends of the earth, but more distinctly, and with greater certainty, are they taught the truth of this matter, who in God's light, see light. This want of righteousness, renders mankind obnoxious to the wrath of God, guilty in themselves, stript of all lawful claim to eternal life, unworthy of the love and
favour

favour of God: nor can he, whose eyes are purer than to behold iniquity, have any delight in them, as thus considered: It being inconsistent with his moral character, as a God infinite in purity, and holiness, to love, or delight, in what is unclean or sinful. And as out of an unclean and sinful nature, none can bring the thing that is clean; it is impossible, that man, by any power whatever, should raise from *thence* a clean, and acceptable righteousness, whereby he might be just before God. Therefore is it, that *all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and as a menstruous cloth, and that by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified.* Withal, such is the miserable state of man by nature, that he cannot deliver himself: since his utmost efforts to do it by his own power and merit, would prove his great and final destruction; had not God of his infinite goodness and mercy, provided better things for us: where he *gave us grace in Christ Jesus, before the world began,* and declared him to be the Lord our righteousness; therefore, now we believe, and confess to the glory of God, that *in the Lord we have righteousness and strength.* Nor, is this righteousness, meerly the merit of his obedience, or sufferings, reckoned or imputed to us, as something distinct from his person, but as he is in *himself*, he is our righteousness: this we possess in him, as the

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members of his body, there being but one, and the same righteousness upon him and us : where we became *his* sin, he became *our* righteousness ; *he being made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, thus with propriety are we called *the righteousness of God*. Not as we are in *ourselves*, but as we are in *him* : having our mystical or spiritual being and existence in his humanity, and with him in God. Hence is it that the same name is named upon him and us : both the Saviour, and his Church, are named the *Lord our righteousness*. This is the righteousness wherein we are exalted ; it is this, which has raised our nature to an eternal sonship ; and seated it upon the throne of his glory : this is that matter of intercession for us, upon the right hand of the majesty on high ; where *if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous* : this is our righteousness in heaven ; before the face, and throne of God for evermore ; and always well accepted of him. The righteousness, shining in the face of the anointed without intermission, presents us ever in its own brightness, before the eyes of his glory, without blemish, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Hence is it, that the manifold sin, and infirmity of our flesh, destroys us not, nor once deprives us of the love and favour of our God. Our Saviour is perfect righteousness, therefore,

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are we compleat in him : even in the perfection of *Jesus* himself. To *this* there can be no addition made, nor can it ever sustain loss. He once took into his own body, the fulness of our curse and shame, and having by himself, through his unknown sorrows, purged our sin away, he sat down as our righteousness on the right hand of the eternal Majesty : where he is our everlasting righteousness. *Jesus* lives for ever, therefore it waxeth not old, it is durable riches and righteousness, it is that righteousness which sin can never spot nor stain. In this righteousness, let us wrap ourselves, and ever more appear before the king of saints. Nor, let our manifold imperfections hinder us at any time, to appear before him with boldness in *this* righteousness : for as much as our acceptance with him, is as that of *Christ* himself. Let our boasting be of *this* all the day long, and trampling all other righteousness under our feet, let our joy, and rejoicing, be in the Lord as our righteousness and strength. — Let us learn with chearfulness, to yield more hearty and constant submission to this divine righteousness. Never let us go about to oppose it, by endeavouring to establish one of our own. But be content for the honour and exaltation of the righteousness of God, to abide the crucifixion of the flesh however painful, to the utter ruin and death of our own righteousness ; until every thought

shall be brought in subjection to the obedience of *Christ*: and, we never draw one moments satisfaction from the thought of any righteousness, but that which *Christ* is made unto us in this covenant. With *this* let us be satisfied, as our heavenly Father is satisfied with us therein. Never let us be looking forward in expectation of any other righteousness, or to be found in any other form before God, than what we are found in, as we are in *Christ* our righteousness.—Let this faith abide lively upon our hearts, least *this* righteousness becomes less valuable to us, for this will be the case where self-sufficiency, and self-righteousness creeps in: or where we are led, to think of any other way of coming to God than as those vile sinners, whose only and perfect righteousness is their Lord and Saviour.—Let us learn daily, thro' the knowledge of ourselves, and of this glorious righteousness, to be more deeply delighted with it: whilst our wonder, joy, and peace increasing, we pour contempt on all other righteousness: and anathematize, and follow with a hue and cry, to the death of the cross, every thought or suggestion, which would once propose in our mind, an expectation *of*, or search *after*, any other righteousness than our Lord; who is our covenant righteousness. Let the suitableness of *this* righteousness be more sensibly upon our minds, from the deeper experience we
have

have of the necessity of it, as also from the inexplicable blessedness of our being found in it. O ! let it with inconceivable pleasure and sweetness, be suitable to us : as raiment to the naked, food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty. Yea heaven itself, to such who were borderers on hell. Let us recommend this righteousness to all poor sinners : and that, not only with the calves of the lips ; but more effectually, by the *work of it*, which is peace : and by the *effect of it*, which is quietness, and assurance for ever. Let that peace, calmness, and full assurance, which we have in our minds ; of our acceptance with God, testify to all, the divinity of this righteousness : and prove matter of encouragement to all miserable sinners, to fly hither for shelter ; where they also shall set to their seal that God is righteous in justifying the ungodly.

And now, my brethren, as the necessity, nature, and benefit of this righteousness, is revealed from faith to faith, let us be attentive to the voice and teaching of that Spirit, whose office it is to glorify *Jesus* in the revelation of this righteousness : and this it does, through the deeper conviction, and certainty, it works on our hearts : of the enmity and perverseness of the carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. This will be always
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to us a sure proof of the necessity of this righteousness. This spirit also discovers the lamb of God, our glorious righteousness; in all his divine heights, depths, breadths and lengths, until we have that inexpressible satisfaction in him as our righteousness, which is heaven itself. Our minds being thus staid upon him, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, as a flowing river is extended towards us: whilst the assurance and reality of the religion of *Jesus*, and of his being *the Lord our righteousness*, is rooted and grounded upon our hearts with such confidence, that all the powers of nature, sin and satan combined, shall strive in vain to shake our steadfastness, or drag us down to misery. Our joy shall be always alone in the Saviour, making mention of his righteousness, and of *his* only.

Thirdly. In this covenant we have holiness. Righteousness is that privation of guilt, and of every charge against us, through the atoning blood of *Jesus*, which leaves us no more conscience for sin: but gives us boldness to enter the holiest, and to lay claim to eternal life. Whilst holiness is that aptness, disposition, or meetness, for the enjoyment of God in the purity and perfection of his nature, without which no man can see the Lord: nor could heaven be heaven, if this was wanting: Therefore, is *Christ* made of God, unto

unto us sanctification. And as he is our covenant we have a perfection of purity in him. We were indeed the vessel which was marr'd between the potter's hands, but yet he thought meet not to cast us away, but made us another vessel: this was brought to light at *Bethlehem*, where that holy thing born of the virgin, was called the Son of God. It was there, our spoiled nature was born and created a-new. And all the curse, and misery of our birth, was destroyed in this holy nativity. Here, were we created a-new in *Christ Jesus*, that holy child, being the beginning of this new creation of God. It is here, that we are in him new creatures: old things being passed away, and all things become new. *In him*, are we made partakers of the divine nature: where each believer, as a part of his humanity, as a member of his body, partakes of that new created, pure and holy nature. Yea, in that humanity, are they filled with all the fulness of God: which dwells bodily in him. Therefore, have *they* in this holy nature of *his*, the samemeetness for the enjoyment of God and glory, which *that man* has who is risen, ascended, and seated on the throne of his glory. In him has the Lord given us what he promised, a *new heart*, and a *new spirit*, having taken the stony from our heart, and given us a heart of flesh; even the holy, broken, pierced heart, of the crucified *Jesus*.
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That one pure heart of *his* shall suffice for all the thousands of Israel : every member of his body, having a full possession of it, as his own. *Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one :* therefore, that once suffering nature of *his*, which *as ours*, was purged and purified from all *our* offences, and impurity, is now *our* perfection of holiness : being made of God unto us sanctification. The holiness, and purity of his human nature, and all its meetness, for union and communion with God, is the portion of the people. In which he hath made them meet, for an inheritance amongst the saints in light. This our holiness is perfect, delighting in the Lord, and delighted in of him. This holiness is not only imputed, or reckoned of God to believers, as mystical parts, or members of the sacred humanity of Jesus ; but it is richly and comfortably possessed by them through faith in the belief of this gospel : wherein they understand, and feel their membership in the body of the Lord Jesus : *be in them, and they in him*, enjoying the perfection of holiness ; and that in such sort, as to bring divine satisfaction to their minds, concerning actual meetness, preparedness for God and glory : this is our true perfect holiness, or sanctification.

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There is, what sundry call sanctification beside : *viz.* a change in manners and spirit, supposed to be always attendant on the belief of the truth. It is also proposed, that this is continually increasing in proportion to faith, or the knowledge of *Christ*. We have indeed in those propositions a very pleasant picture exhibited ; but threatned by the prophet with the *day of the Lord*, *Isaiah ii. 16.* And that this is not our sanctification is evident from its imperfection : for notwithstanding such who preach for doctrines, the commandments and traditions of men, would impose upon us, with a sanctification in part : the divine law, which is evermore to be considered as the touchstone and standard of true holiness ; will not by any means admit of it : but constantly declares the offender in one point, *guilty of the whole.*

As it appears, that sanctification, and perfection, are in the scripture terms synonymous ; and that man in himself is not perfect, as knowing but in part, seeing but in part, not daring to say he hath no sin in him, where there is the least regard to truth : with safety and ease we conclude, that any partial change in man, however useful and necessary in common life, cannot be his sanctification ; nor dare we give flattering titles to men nor things, by calling that pure, which the law, holy, just and good, will not acknowledge such.

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Again, that this is not our sanctification, is farther plain from the Apostle, who tells us, that *Christ* is made of God unto us, *righteousness and sanctification*; what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. *Christ* is here preached, as strictly in his own person, our holiness, as he is our righteousness; as perfectly and as fully the one as the other; and as instantaneously received, and felt in all its fruits and effects. Again, the change in man cannot be his sanctification, from the nature of true holiness, which always tends to the annihilation of self, and the alone exaltation of God our Saviour, emptying the creature of all his own wisdom, righteousness, goodness, and purity, that *Jesus* might be his whole Saviour. And this is only produced through the knowledge of *Jesus*, and our belief and trust in him, as our only and perfect holiness. But that holiness which a man supposes he hath in himself, tends only to lift him up in the pride and arrogance of his own mind; and being ignorant of the nature of true holiness, he exalts in a pharisaic impudence before God; pleading his own purity he takes part with Satan, and turns the accuser of the brethren, as though all were vile and impure beside himself. This holiness at best is but a picking, whispering, uncharitable, back-biting, evil-speaking, envying, malicious holiness. Hence is it we see many who are advocates for this holiness, hating their
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fellow-creatures with a perfect hatred, and that because they think them not as good and virtuous as themselves. Others will contend from this principle, with such earnestness for holiness, that they run themselves into all manner of ungodly tempers, until they are filled with all the fruits of unrighteousness. Others are so immersed in it, that they think it not enough to withdraw their company, so as to have no dealings or correspondence with the unholy people, but they use all diligence in back-biting, evil-speaking, censuring, and condemning the sinners; raising them as many enemies as may be, daily seeking their ruin, rejoicing in their misery, and would, if possible, not only rob them of their life and being here, but also sentence them to eternal death. These are the fruits of man's holiness. Now I can be sooner persuaded that I have not a being, than that this mischievous spirit can be the spirit of God's holiness, since I see it bear such accursed fruit. For us once to entertain a thought of our being holy in ourselves, is an abomination before God, and a shrewd sign that we are not yet washed from our filthiness. When we once begin to please ourselves with the thought of our being better than we have been, or better than our neighbour, or draw the least comfort or satisfaction from any holiness we think we have in ourselves, we discover our enmity against God, and are blinded with the pride of our nature. Pride

and presumption being the only eyes by which a man thinks he can see at any time any holiness out of *Christ*. For, if the most upright among the sons of men were to be carefully weighed in the balance of the sanctuary the spiritual mind would discern, not only imperfection attending some particulars of their life, but the whole of it. Every thought, and word, and work unholy. I think it impossible for man whilst here, to *do*, or *suffer* any thing for God *sensibly*, without that pride and vanity attending it, which is enmity against God. He cannot speak a word for him boldly and affectionately, but he must feel this tickling evil of pride if he knows himself. Nor has he in secret one pious thought rising in his bosom, if noticeable to him, but what he has this secret pride and vanity attending it. I am sensible this will not be very acceptable to many, because it is taking away their Gods, and then what have they more? Besides, that which I call pride and vanity attending doing, or suffering for God, is rather esteemed of by many as that only divine comfort and satisfaction which is found in religion: the removal of which would leave them in a miserable situation: However, as I speak not to please men I shall not be discouraged. If any one should answer that the holiness of man appears, in the *fight* that he has of this pride and legality of his nature, and in the *hatred* that he bears to it:

it : I would only ask such if they do not find pride rise again from the fight and hatred of their former pride ? And from the fight of this rising evil they may find it rising again, and so on to infiniteness ; where every discovery of the nature and evil thereof serves to exalt it and raise it higher ; it strengthens itself from every measure of hatred we feel in our hearts to it, still gaining a surer foundation. And thus it works, until he that feels this, is as sure as he is of his own existence, that there is no holiness in man, and cries out with the prophet, *the heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things, who can know it ?* This is a doctrine of misery to the children of self-righteousness ; but not so to such who can deny themselves, and make choice of *Jesus* as the better part, the one thing needful : they hastily retire from themselves to God our Saviour, as their perfection of righteousness and holiness, being deeply sensible that they are saved by grace, and that what man has in himself is not his sanctification, but only as he hath *Christ* revealed in him, the hope of glory : and to such it appears, that *Christ* only is their holiness, as their nature is pure and spotless in him. I am positive, that whilst a believer lives in the faith of this gospel, continuing to believe in *Christ*, as his perfection of holiness, he will find the end of sanctification, or true holiness answered in his spirit, through that

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peace, satisfaction, actual readiness, and sensible meetness for the enjoyment of God in glory. Nor can his froward flesh hinder this by all its obstinacy, pride, and enmity. His meetness for glory and happiness is not founded upon any conformity which is supposed to be in the flesh, to the law and purity of God; but it is founded alone upon that conformity to it which he feels, as he has his spiritual being and existence in the holy glorified humanity of his God and Saviour: which being or existence is without enmity towards God, it having been destroyed in his body on the cross. And whilst he lives in the faith and understanding of his membership in that body, he shall without interruption feelingly possess the grace and glory of which I now speak.—Whilst we abide in this faith it is true, there is a gradual conquest of nature in its opposing powers, which are exercised in the tempers and passions of the mind; there is a casting down of every high thought and imagination, and a bringing of it into subjection to the obedience of *Christ*. This is that following of *Jesus*, under his influence, as our fountain of holiness, which he recommends when he says. *take my yoke upon you, and learn of me*; whereby the spirit and behaviour of the christian man becomes more like unto his Lord, in meekness, lowliness, love, joy, humility, self-denial, and heavenly mindedness.

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And if any would ask, why might not this be called our holiness or sanctification? To this I answer, that if we take it to be what it is *not*, it will immediately cease to be what it *is*. At present we consider it as the effects of righteousness, where we believe *Jesus* to be our whole salvation, and live in him as such. But when we once would look upon this fruit or change as any part of righteousness, and would set it up in *Christ's* place, or endeavour to satisfy ourselves in it, as our holiness or sanctification, it becomes our shame, our own righteousness, our filthy rags and menstruous cloth. Besides, true holiness consists in a constant privation of itself, as it refers to any knowledge or conception which man has of it, as being in himself. It cannot be imagined, that our Lord calls upon us to speak a lie, when he would have us after we have done all, to acknowledge ourselves *unprofitable servants*; if this was not truth the lesson which the apostle teaches us would be impracticable in reality, where he exhorts each man *to esteem of others as better than himself*. Again, these fruits cannot be our sanctification, because they increase not to perfection; and this it does not, because the increase of it depends upon the life and constancy of that faith by which we as sinners rest in *Christ* for salvation, and as our perfect holiness. Therefore it neither increases, nor remains to be what it is in its evangelick

evangelick nature, any longer than we thus believe. Not only the sight, but the expectation of perfection in ourselves, cannot but admit of such conceptions, which leads us from that true poverty of spirit wherein the fruits of holiness consist, into those thoughts which are highly affronting and derogatory to the honour of God's wisdom, love, and purity, which has produced that great and complete salvation in *Christ*, wherein he only is well pleased, and evermore delights in us. If we had perfection in ourselves from the fruits of faith, the effect would destroy the cause; the cause of this change or fruit is allowed to be that faith and trust, which we as sinners in ourselves have in *Christ Jesus*; but if we had perfection in ourselves, we should have this faith no longer; and therefore the cause being destroyed, the effect must of necessity cease, and is no longer produced. Therefore to expect perfection in ourselves is to turn from that we have in *Jesus*, or to withdraw that satisfaction we have therein; so that by looking to this for perfection we turn it into sin and folly. Let us therefore learn to be content *with*, and fully satisfied *in* that perfection of holiness which we have in *Christ* our covenant; let our glorying be alone in that. Let us not endure the temptation to turn from a certainty to an uncertainty; yea, rather from a certain truth to a certain falshood. And
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out of a foolish complaisance to what is called orthodoxy, to call that holiness which God and our own consciences tell us is unholiness, yea, enmity against the Lord. But let us honestly bear witness, that there is *none good but God*; and that *all the imaginations of man's heart are evil continually*, and that *Christ* only is our holiness. And this let us do by a constant renouncing of all our own good, neither seeking nor expecting anything in ourselves, whereof we might boast before God or man; but faithfully abiding in our Saviour, as our alone purity and perfection; depending, trusting, and believing in him with all our hearts; and there shall we feel a constant readiness and meetness for glory and immortality, and shall want no other preparations than what we have in him, and by us possessed in him through believing. Our peace, love, joy, fellowship, and communion with God shall then abide; nor shall the manifold corruptions, with which we are beset in the flesh, hinder us to wait with delight for the *coming of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*.

Fourthly, In this covenant we have peace and reconciliation. *In me you have peace*, saith the Saviour: *he is our peace*, saith the apostle: out of him all mankind comes under the denomination of wicked men: *because all have sinned, and have come short of*
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the glory of God. Nor is there any *peace unto the wicked, saith my God.* Therefore was it that he bare the chastisement of our peace, and by his stripes our breach of peace was healed, insomuch that *Jesus* is our peace, nor have we any beside him : and that not only as he has purchased, or procured peace for us, nor only as the gospel of his blood is to us the tydings of peace, but as he is in himself he is our peace, as having two natures in one person, being always *Emmanuel*, or God with us. When we look to *Christ* on this account, we inherit and feel that peace to be our own, which he *himself* hath, with no other difference, than that he is the *prince*, and we are the *subjects* thereof. All that fulness of peace, which always subsists and abounds in his person as God-man, is ours ; for it is in that union our nature is in peace with God ; and according to the measure of our faith and understanding, is our sensible possession of this matter. This is that peace on earth, and good-will towards men, which was mentioned in the angel's song on the morning of the redeemer's birth. God and man, heaven and earth, have made peace in his person, and this peace remaineth without interruption. To have one's heart abiding here, is to have peace extended to one as a river ; he has promised to keep that mind in perfect peace, which is staid upon him. This peace in the fountain as our covenant,

venant, can never fail; a true believer's peace springs not from any matter of goodness, which he hath done or thought of; neither from any change, or quality, which he feels as wrought in him; but it ariseth alone from that harmony in righteousness and true holiness, which he perceives between God and man in the person of *Christ*; of whose body he being a member, or part, is therein put in possession of all that fulness of peace which the human nature of *Jesus* possesseth as in perpetual union with God. Thus have we everlasting and perpetual peace in our glorious covenant. Now this peace is in reality feelingly, and with unspeakable joy in our hearts, whilst we live in the faith of *Christ's* being our peace; but when we depart from this faith, and begin to seek peace elsewhere, as in our repentance, hatred to sin, holy conversation, and the like; we err from the Lord, as those who have not known the way of peace, and either bring ourselves into misery and desperation, as those to whom there is no peace, or else, which is as bad, or worse, we rest in a false peace, and glory before God in own shame.

Let us therefore be fixed upon God our Saviour for everlasting peace. Let us carefully avoid, treat with disdain, and pour contempt upon all the offers of peace, which are made unto us by the flesh, upon what con-

dition soever, whether it be for repentance, for hatred to sin, for love to God, or for holiness of life. Let all such offers of peace be slighted by us, trampled under foot, and eternally rejected; and let it be our sole contentment, satisfaction, and exceeding great joy, that *Christ* alone, as he is in himself, is in our peace. Let us at all times with cheerfulness, readiness, and infinite pleasure, accept of that peace, which his wounds, blood, and sacrifice, tenders unto us, as having destroyed the enmity which once subsisted, and now makes over to us, as our own, that unspeakable peace, which that once crucified, but now exalted man; has, as seated on the right hand of the majesty on high, and satisfied with the travel of his soul. This is that covenant of peace, which shall not be removed, saith the Lord.

If, at any time, through the darkness and blindness of our mind, the malice or cunning of the enemy, we lose sight of this covenant of peace, after we have believed; and are therefore involved in sin and fear, let us not think it enough that we are broken hearted for our past transgressions, that we weep and mourn for our offences, and resolve not to err from his paths for the future; I say, let us not from the consideration and sense of this disposition, speak peace to our souls, and be at rest: for this is dangerous,
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false, and deceitful; and speaking peace where there is no peace. Rather than accept of peace upon these terms, let us chuse sorrow, and refuse to be comforted, until we return as at the first to the joy of his salvation: to view the saviour, as our perfect peace, in whom God and man are in perfect amity, *the counsel of peace being between them both*. In this view let us constantly abide; that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God our Saviour.

God was in Christ (our covenant) reconciling the world to himself: not imputing their trespasses unto them. The offended, and offending natures are here brought together in one Lord *Jesus Christ*: where they are reconciled, yea married to each other, in the unity of one person: which union is durable as the days of eternity. And this is our glory, as it secures our peace and reconciliation. To know this for ourselves with certainty, is to believe God: and no longer to go about to make him a liar: yea, indeed it is to be reconciled to him, and that in all the perfections of his nature; so as not to be affrighted at the discovery of any one of his perfections, but to rejoice in the infiniteness, eternity, and fullness of God. In this faithful view, we are reconciled to all his dealings
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with us : being persuaded that God is love, and in him there is no fury at all. It is here *our Maker is our husband, the Lord of hosts is his name.* Here it is that he has betrothed us unto himself forever : yea, he has betrothed us in *righteousness*, and in *judgment*, and in *loving kindness*, and *mercies*, and in *faithfulness*, and therefore we know the Lord. *He hath reconciled us, in the body of his flesh through death ;* in that body we are brought very near to God ; and whilst we abide in the living faith and experience, of our membership in this body, we shall feel the heights and depths of this reconciliation in our hearts ; through much inward peace, and love of God, much nearness to him, and familiarity with him. We shall not then say, who shall go to heaven to bring him down, or to the deep to fetch him up, for, by the blood of this covenant in *Christ Jesus*, we are made nigh to God, the supreme fountain of all love and blessedness. In this covenant God is familiar with us ; nor standeth he at any time, afar off from us. He is familiar with us as a father, husband, and friend : he opens, and discloses his secrets to us, nor does he ever wear a frown upon his face towards us, let us therefore beware of entertaining any thought of him, as a dreadful, or terrible Being : for this is to live and think of him, in the carnal mind : which is enmity against him. Let

us be watchful against every sound that represents him as an enemy to mankind : or, that with seeming solemnity and frightful devotion, goes about to hedge him round with the inconceivable terrors of his majesty : so that the children of men dare not draw near, but smitten with horror and amazement, they endeavour to fly from the face of the Lord. These thunders, and terrible appearances of God, are reserved for the torment of devils, and is the portion of such unhappy spirits, who refused to kiss the son. But when our God appears for the deliverance of *Jacob*, and to save sinners from the wrath to come, he covers himself with a veil of flesh, and appears *in fashion as a man*, not to affright us, but to banish our fears, and to cure all our woes : where he says, *Be not afraid, it is I* ; racks and tortures, these instruments of cruelty may extort confessions, as they put the miserable object to most exquisite pain, but they never were intended to convey the power of love ; nor is it expected they should ever influence the mind with that divine and softer passion. Nor can the threats of damnation, the terrors of hell, and an angry God represented to the senses ; ever be of any use to bring souls to the knowledge and love of *Jesus*, nor is God manifested thereby as a God of love ; so that none are converted thereby to the religion of *Christ*. Let our ears be shut
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therefore to all these sounds, and only open to the voice of that blood, which speaketh better things than the blood of *Abel*. Under this sacred sound, let us always approach our God, believing in him as reconciled in this covenant, nor ever think any otherwise of him. It is in this covenant we cry unto him, *my father, my God, the rock of my salvation*: and he answers us, *that he has loved us with an everlasting love*: and that *he will not remove the covenant of his peace from us*. Here has he gathered us with everlasting kindness, and hath solemnly and peacefully sworn that he will *not be angry with us, nor rebuke us for ever*. In this let us evermore rejoice and abide with satisfaction, then shall we be saved from every devouring care and all disquietude of mind, and shall be without murmuring under every dispensation of his grace, and providence, however the desires and inclination of the flesh might be crossed and disappointed thereby. And, though his ways are in the great deep, and as the heavens are above the earth, so are his thoughts above ours, yet shall our joy and rejoicing be in his will. And ceasing from all anxiety of mind, we shall constantly know and feel, that *all things work together for the good of them that love God, and are the called, according to his purpose*; this is that true peace and reconciliation which we have in *Christ Jesus* our holy covenant.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, We have in this covenant strength and victory; strength for the war, and victory over the enemy. Our state here is compared to a warfare, from the trials we are exposed to, and the manifold enemies we have to encounter with; and how unable we are to maintain such a state, and to persevere therein, appears from the word of the Lord, which speaks of us as without strength; yea, our Saviour has declared, that *without him we can do nothing*. Our trials are numerous, I know of none that human nature is subject to, that a christian can be said to be exempted from; but with a difference truly, since *all things work together for good, to them that love God*. The enemies of our salvation are indeed powerful, politick, vigilant, implacable; the fulness of this consideration laid in the scale against our weakness, so abundantly outweighs the hope of man from himself, that it is not without surprise and wonder, we see one child of man persevere to the end in the way of the Lord; yea, we should look upon it as an utter impossibility, had we no other wisdom for our guide than our own, or no other arm for our defence; but *in the Lord have we righteousness and strength*. *Unto him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed*. This affords us infinite matter of support under all our trials, that the captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings;

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perfect in that power, which as our kinsman, and Saviour, is given into his hand; this he has received as a reward of his tormenting, bloody sufferings, and shameful death. He has also received it on our behalf, always to be employed for our protection and safety. He was made perfect also in the deep experience of all human miseries; not a trial awaits us, nor enemy for us to encounter with, but what he hath met with already, and conquered through his unknown sorrows. He is also perfect in sympathy, and fellow-feeling with us under all our infirmities, so that he is able to save to the uttermost, and also to have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. *Such an high priest becomes us.* He, by bearing all our sicknesses, sin, and sorrow, hath sanctified the whole state of trial to us; so that we cannot now tread in any afflictive path, but we behold the footsteps of God our Saviour before us; this keeps us fearless, and supports us in the lonesome tract; and by degrees learns us in whatever state we are therein to be content: this is our fortitude and passive strength in the time of trial. *When the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him. This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian comes into the land.* That power and strength which we employ against the oppressor, that he might not make inroads upon our peace,

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or lay waste the heritage of the Lord, is the strength and omnipotence of *Jesus of Nazareth*; this he hath taught us where he hath told us, that *all power in heaven and earth is given into his hand*; this strength is given to every one of us in him, but chiefly entrusted in his hand, as one to whom it is more natural to care for us, then it was for him to live: and being chosen to be the *captain of our salvation*, he hath strength, council and skill for the war. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the man *Jesus*, and is the portion and possession of his human nature; in which nature of his we being made sons, are *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*, in whom all that is called God, and that is to be worshipped, is our strength and support; hence it is we *can do all things through Christ strengthening us*. In him, as our covenant, have we strength for the war.

Take hold of my strength, saith the Lord, and be at peace with me. Let us not dishonour our God and Saviour, and that by our groundless fears, or blasphemous suggestions, as though sin and Satan had more strength and power to destroy us, than our Lord hath to heal and deliver us. Nor let us think that Satan is more watchful for our ruin than our God is for our welfare; or, that Satan hath more policy and wisdom to ensnare us, than what our Saviour has to prevent our

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misery. Let us not be afraid of our enemies, whilst our God is stronger than they. Let us always oppose his strength to theirs, then shall we know the eternal God to be our refuge, and his everlasting arm our defence.

His strength is perfected in our weakness, when we cease to have any expectations from our own power or strength against the face of the enemy, but wholly rely upon *Christ* our strength, and by the spirit of faith employ him as such, then will it appear, that he is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smites the image of self-sufficiency, until there is no place found for it, whilst this stone becomes a great mountain, and fills all the earth, then are we strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. The strength which preserves us sons of God, is that which maintains the sonship of *Jesus*; and this is the everlasting strength of the Lord *Jehovah*; in this we are impregnable, and look with defiance and contempt upon all the enemies of our salvation and peace, and have our glorying only in the Lord our God. All this fulness of strength, which is in *Christ* our covenant, is to be possessed and made use of by us, and to be turned in every time of need against the face of the adversary. And this we do when we abide in the faith of our relation to him,

him, as one flesh and spirit with him, then we find that every lifted hand and moving tongue which is against us is against him, and that we are unconquerable whilst he is so. We use his strength when we cease from ourselves, and have not the least dependance or expectation, in any strength or resolution of our own, to overcome the least, or most despised of our enemies; but when our heart and eye is fixed, with all confidence, immoveably, and with full certainty upon God our Saviour as our strength, we go forth conquering and to conquer. This is our patience and fortitude in the hour of adversity, and a self-denying mind in the day of prosperity.

In this covenant, victory has declared for us against all our adversaries; yea, we are more than conquerors, for our enemies are made to serve us. The world, the flesh, and the devil, our three potent enemies, are destroyed in this covenant, as our Saviour assures us, when he bids us *be of good cheer*, because he hath *overcome the world*; also *that he hath crucified the flesh, when for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh*; and that he also hath *destroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil*; over all those principalities and powers our God and Saviour openly triumphed, and we in him. His victories and triumphs are all our own; therefore is it that *our warfare*

fare is accomplished, that our iniquity is pardoned. He hath not only conquered for himself, to get him an everlasting name, but he has conquered in our feeble flesh, and in our name; so that all his victories are truly our own; all the spoil and benefit thereof is ours. It is his will that his dominion and power should be our victory, strength, and joy, yea our heaven; therefore was it that he said, *I will that they may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* Glory be to thee, O Lord. Our God and Saviour would have us be glad and rejoice in his victories as our own; therefore has he consigned them over to us, as the lawful matter of our triumph and comfort: where he says, *be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* And here it is, and here only, that we overcome and inherit all things. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith; that faith which persuades us that our Lord hath gotten himself the victory; that faith which informs us of the manner of this victory's being obtained in our name and nature; that faith which appropriates this victory, and lays claim to it, to all the benefit and joys of it as our own; that faith which rejoices and triumphs in it, and satisfies the soul in it, under all its tribulations; this is the victory by which we overcome the world; a greater victory than ever *Alexander* or *Cæsar* won; and yet it hath not cost us in our own
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identical persons one blow, nor one moment's study; but the cost was all our Saviour's, *who trod the wine press alone*, and conquered by his blood and death, by which blood we overcome through this word of our testimony.

Thus have we strength and victory in *Christ* our covenant. In the faith of this let us abide; then shall we come to the spirits of just men made perfect, whose life is a life of triumph. Here indeed shall we triumph over the world, sin, death, and the devil, and rejoice with exceeding great joy; here shall our joy be full. And if ever we are caught in the toils of sin and Satan, it is because we abide not in this faith where we are always victorious; nor are these entanglements without the especial permission of the holy one, that we may know our own weakness, and not attempt by any power of our own to gain that victory, which is already won by *Christ* our covenant, in whom we are *delivered from the hands of our enemies, and from all that hate us, that we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life*. Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Sixthly, In this covenant we have eternal rest. Victory leads us to rest, and this we have in *Jesus Christ* our Lord. That present

sent state of things in which men live after sense and reason is not their rest, it is polluted. But yet *there remaineth a rest for the children of God*. Mankind are described by nature, as working, toiling, labouring, and like *Issachar* couching between two burdens, by which the restless and unsettled state of the mind is plainly pointed out. The unbelieving state is as devoid of rest, as the Egyptian bondage was to the children of *Israel*, whose increasing slavery kept them strangers to rest. Therefore is it *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly*, that our God giveth rest, even all that fulness of rest which is in *Christ* our covenant. And this is the rest that *Jesus* himself is entered into, by virtue of that one sacrifice of his own body, blood, and soul, through the eternal Spirit unto God, as a lamb without spot or blemish. The compleatness and fulness of this one sacrifice, hath administered an abundant entrance for him, and we in him into eternal rest. This rest is secured to us in the perfection of that sacrifice, and in that infinite pleasure and satisfaction that God has therein. It is in this sacrifice that God rests in his love towards us, and it is in this we rest also in our confidence towards him. In the sufficiency of this sacrifice we have perpetual rest, because this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. And

as he laid the foundation of his rest in suffering, blood-shedding, and death ; so now is he entered upon it in all its glory, and that for eternity. With *him* are *we* entered into rest, as we are *risen with him, and seated with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus* ; and thus have we entered with him as that spiritual seed, who had their being and existence in him as his mystical body ; the completeness and salvation of which depended upon the perfection and salvation of that real body of his flesh. This body of his flesh preserved without a broken bone, infallibly preserves the mystical body in its own perfection, without the loss or ruin of one member thereof. The body of his flesh raised and saved from sin and death ; from all farther suffering, fatigue, and toil, and now seated where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest, has perfected the mystical body in the same blessedness. The one being always contained in the other, without any possibility of a separation. This body consists of many members, yea the fulness of it is the church, consisting of the many thousands of *Israel*, washed in the blood of the lamb. This body, as thus existing in him, entered in with him, to all that fulness of rest, and glory, which he is entered into and abides *with him, and in him* there for ever. Thus have we rest in the covenant, his rest being truly ours ; but though

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this grace was given us in *Christ Jesus*, and this glorious rest reserved for us in him, yet having our foolish minds darkened through unbelief and vanity, and being strangers to the grace given us in *Christ*, we are by nature a miserable people in ourselves, and like the dove can find no rest for the sole of our foot. However, our ignorance shall not frustrate the grace of God, nor hinder us to enjoy this rest which we have in *Christ* our covenant. And therefore when the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, receives of the things of *Christ*, and shews them to us, taking of the eye-salve of his blood and merits, and anointing our eyes that we might see his glory, then we perceive that we are already entered into that rest in our Saviour, which we had so long sought in vain. We then immediately begin to take possession of it in our hearts; and through believing to enter more fully into the glory of it. This is to know, and possess for *ourselves* according to our measure, that perfect rest which we have in *Jesus*, as members of his body, and as having our spiritual being in him. And as our fulness of understanding and light into this matter is, and according to that measure of influence it has upon our hearts, so is that assurance, quietness and rest, which we actually have in our own souls. This is to have rest in the covenant.

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He that is entered into rest hath ceased from his own works, as God also ceased from his. This is that true sabbath of rest, into which the *Jews* could not enter, because of unbelief. God rested not until he had finished the works of his creation, and pronounced them very good. Neither doth the believer rest, until he see the second creation finished as the first, and also pronounced very good. And this creation he perceives is finished in *Christ*, where we are created a-new; and immediately upon sight of this we enter into a new state, and possess a new heaven, and a new earth, where we have a perpetual sabbath. When God rested on the seventh day, it was from all his works, and in this covenant rest, the believer ceases from all *his* works. He had been long before now striving possibly to be a creator, and would not hear of rest, until he had created some good habits, frames, or qualities in himself, from whence he might reasonably expect rest, and for a season tormented himself in vain, to make ropes of sand. And here he had remained, had not the day-spring from on high visited him, and led him to the true rest. There all his aspirings drop down to the dust, his sabbath begins, and his toil is over, and ceasing from all his own works, he rests for ever in the new creation of God.

Their rest shall be glorious, saith the Lord. He that enters this rest, ceaseth from all his cares: the finished salvation is before his face for ever. He hath done plotting, contriving, and laying schemes to obtain happiness, or to secure what he has obtained: Such is the compleatness and sufficiency of that one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, that it has at once obtained and secured his salvation. This delivers him from all fear, the bond-woman's tormenting son is cast out, so as not to be heir with the son of the free-woman. This rest is a divine satisfaction in the mind, as fully satisfied and contented with that redemption, which is in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins. Nor are we any longer troubled, and careful about many things, but are content with our Saviour, as the one thing needful, the better part, which shall not be taken away from us: and so sure are we of his sufficiency, that we rest from all desire after any other matter to make us happy. And if at any time, through the legality and over busyness of our corrupt heart, our mind should be darkned, and we get into fearing, toiling, and caring again, let us remember from whence we are fallen, and cry out before our Saviour, return to thy rest, O my soul. Let us also be careful to avoid the task-masters, since we are slaves no longer; and also to let our old tutors and governors know that

that the Father's appointed time is come, when we should no longer be under their rule. Let not the censure of the Pharisee, nor the snarling of such who are holy in their own eyes, and wise in their own conceit, affright thee from thy rest. And if they should complain, that thou hast left them to serve alone, yea, if they should accuse thee to thy Lord, be not affrighted, and driven from thy rest, as though somewhat yet remained to be done, ere thou couldst be happy ; remember thy strength is to sit still, and constantly believe, with all thy heart, that *Christ* and thee are one : that thou art free, as he is free, and all his rest is thine.

Having very briefly considered the nature of this covenant ; and given a few hints of what grace and glory is secured therein for the heart that believeth ; I shall conclude, with a few words more, by way of farther recommending this covenant.

This covenant is indeed given for the people, for the people of *Adam's* race ; nor has the Lord pointed out any particular people, by any especial qualities, which they might be supposed to have above others, as the persons for whom this covenant is given : but he has told us, that it is given for the people ; for the lost and sinful people, that

that none amongst the people, however vile and hell-deserving they may feel themselves, may have any ground for this objection, that the covenant was not given for them : nevertheless, the unbelieving mind will raise many objections, why they should not believe, that this covenant, with all its fullness of grace, is given for them. And first, they judge themselves unqualified for the reception of this gospel, but, indeed, this is a mistake, for I dare venture to affirm, that you are qualified for it ; sin and Satan has qualified you, whether you know it or not ; *for the scripture has concluded all under sin*, by which you are qualified for this salvation by grace. Are you sinners, contemners of God's word and commandment, haters of God, and your minds enmity against him ? Have you fleshly lusts, which war against your soul ? Have you a hard heart, wandering affections, pride, ignorance, unbelief, anger, deceit ? And withal, are you those, who although you feel these things, yet cannot mourn or be grieved for it ? then are you a sinner, and yet but a sinner, therefore you are qualified for the belief of the truth, even of that redemption, which is in the blood of the lamb, the forgiveness of sins ; since it is for sinners, and only sinners, the Saviour died, and for them was given a covenant of grace. Again, you will say, that you are unworthy of the glory and riches of this covenant ;

venant : that is true, in regard of any merit of our own, we are eternally unworthy, but in his love, who gave this covenant, you are worthy of eternal life ; and if you are content, as a worthless sinner, to shelter you in this covenant, I bid you welcome in the name of the Lord. . Here you shall feel all your wants supplied. May my God and Saviour shew you this covenant. Here is righteousness for you that are unrighteous ; holiness for the impure in heart ; life for the dead ; peace and reconciliation for you whose minds are as a troubled sea ; strength and victory for the weak and fearful, and rest for you that are weary : yea, here is perfect, finished, eternal salvation for you, and all secured in the power and glory of God. When you feel the deadness, unrighteousness, impurity, anxiety, weakness, and evil of your sinful nature, be not discouraged, but let your heart and mind be fixed upon *Christ* your covenant, and your eye be open to behold your compleatness in him, in whom you are just and holy, and blessed and saved, with an everlasting salvation. Let this knowledge be real in your heart, then you will be satisfied with *Jesus Christ* our Lord, and then there shall be no more complaining in your streets, nor leading into captivity ; and as the corruption and enmity of your own hearts cannot make you afraid, neither will any pretended goodness or sanctity of man stumble you,

you, as though they had whereof they might boast; for in the knowledge of yourselves, you will know human nature with that certainty, that it will be in vain they put the vizard on, and you will be as sure, as you are, that your God and Father has created you, that *Jesus* only is holy, that he only is the Lord: then it will matter nothing with you what any man pretends to be, for you shall gather every day with greater certainty from yourselves and all mankind, that there is *none good but God*; and that *Jesus* is the whole of your righteousness, strength, and purity, and he shall be your glory: and whilst you are here, let me remind you of that word of God our Saviour: *blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me*. When we come to rest with satisfaction in this covenant, there are several offences arise, as the scandal of his blood. Whoso is coming off from all to *Jesus*, *the devil throws him down, and tears him*. There is then fiercer assaults from him, because the agreement with death is broken, and the covenant with hell is disannulled; the mind is at such a season more strangely beset; but blessed is he who takes no offence from hence at the covenant of peace. At this time also is sinful nature more abundantly exasperated, and a man's foes are them of his own household, with a witness. This covenant condemns the carnal mind to torment, that *Dives*, once so rich in righteousness,

ousness, goodness, and self-sufficiency is stript and crucified, and condemned to hell, by this revelation of the Son of God, and a gulph fixed to keep it there, whilst not a dram of comfort is afforded it from the riches of the covenant: therefore is it enraged, and, like a lion in a chain, roused up and provoked, it roars, and fiercely strives to devour, but happy is he that is not affrighted at it; yea, blessed is he who takes no occasion from thence, as perceiving it in himself, or others, to be offended at *Jesus*, or his free salvation. Again, there are those who watch for the reproach and dishonour of *Jesus*, and take pleasure in it, through the infirmities of his children. They cannot think how a man that is a sinner can be happy. They think the truth and power of the gospel stands in the goodness of man, and therefore they despise the treasure, when they find it in an earthen vessel. They either object against the gospel as a licentious doctrine, because they that believe it are men, and are subject to infirmities, as those who are yet in the body; or else they take occasion to wound and dishonour it, by grossly representing to mankind the sin and imperfections of them that believe: thus hardening the hearts of men against it, they are offended at *Christ* in his members, because they are tempted or afflicted, or because they have been found sinners. But, O my brethren, to
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you I speak, who know this covenant: remember the words of your Lord; *blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* O be not offended at *Jesus*, if those souls who are a coming to him are thrown down, and torn by the enemy: he is yet a God of love I can assure you; indeed he is. Let not this discourage you, or cause you to think that he regards not the peace of his children. O be not offended with *Christ* your covenant, when you see the struggles of nature in them that believe, or when you feel them in yourselves. Do not then say I am deceived by this covenant, because you feel yourselves no better, but rather worse, as to the corruptions of the mind, than what you were when you leaned upon your own righteousness. Let not this make you offended at the Saviour, or weary of him, nor angry with his gospel; for indeed he intends goodness and mercy towards you, and only means to drain you of your own righteousness and strength, that you may be compleatly happy in him, and that you may enter into the rest of the covenant.

O, be not offended with *Jesus*, from his childrens spots and infirmities; let his grace and love appear more free, rich and illustrious through their weaknesses, since where sin hath abounded, grace hath superabounded. You wonder, perhaps, why so many infirmities

infirmities attend them that believe, and profess to be happy in *Jesus* ; but wait patiently, and our Lord will let you know the reason, and that there was a needs-be for them all, according to the order of his dealings, in his providence and grace with man. They have no pleasure in what is contrary to *Christ*, though possibly they have been seemingly more overtaken, and caught in the toils of sin and shame than any. They can tell you that sin is hell, and they find it so, and with strong cries and bitter tears, they have often besought their God, that they might never dishonour him, through the messenger of Satan buffetting them, when he has only answered them that his grace was sufficient for them. Our Lord designs to teach them, and others, by all their imperfections, the inexplicable riches of his blood and death. Our Saviour is satisfied with them, as the travail of his soul ; and though they are black in themselves, yet are they comely in *Christ* their covenant, where all the fulness of his righteousness, grace, and mercy is theirs ; and there are they without blemish, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; view them always there, behold them there, then will you never take offence at the faithful lover of souls, at our gracious, holy, compassionate God and Saviour ; nor will you then, with the Pharisees, object against him, with saying, *this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*

O, my brethren, beware of being offended at the mysteries of the grace of God, nothing is more common than for persons to set down that for foolishness, yea, for a falshood, which they themselves understand not, and for no other reason, than because they understand it not. I doubt not, but this covenant will be treated thus by many, but if I might give my advice, it should be, not to pass rash censures upon any thing you read or hear, but learn to suspend your judgement, until you have honestly weighed it, in that thought and consideration, which is subordinate to the teaching of the word and spirit of the blessed *Jesus*. Learn, with the disciples, to ask the meaning of such things that are too high for you, and he will give you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. As I would warn you to beware of being so much prejudiced in favour of any man, to receive and swallow from their hand, without any examination, that which might terminate in your hurt, and the dishonour of your Lord; so would I also warn you of being prejudiced against any child of man, so as to reject the testimony of the Lord upon that account. Is there not cause to fear, that many sink into a dangerous situation here, and that they reject, slight, and speak evil, either with anger or ridicule, of what they know to be the truth, and as coming from their own mouths could die for it)

it) and that only, because it is professed, and born witness of, by such whom they, upon some account or other, are prejudiced against? Such is their hatred to their fellow-creatures, that they will spitefully and obstinately, and that contrary to their own consciences, trample on, and endeavour to suppress the glory of *Jesus*, rather than the object of their hatred should be thought to be in the right. And yet this is very consistent with the holiness and goodness of man, and such is the zeal of human nature for this; that when the man has once drawn his sword against his adversary, rather than he will put it up in peace, he will revengefully wound him, though it should be through the heart of the lamb of God. But, O my brethren, fly from this, let not your hatred to your fellow-creature be greater than your love to your God; nor slight the covenant because a sinful man bears witness of it. If you understand it not, spread it before the great prophet of his church, as what you want him to teach you, and he will guide you, and lead you into all truth.

And you that are entered into the rest of the covenant, let it appear that this rest is fruitful, and that it does not consist, as the carnal mind would suggest, in spiritual slothfulness. But that it rather produces an active mind for the glory of your God and Saviour.

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There are none of the children of men, can serve God with that chearfulness which you serve him with. To you his service is perfect freedom ; to you his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. You can set to your seal that his yoke is easy, and his burden light. Your body, soul, and spirit are his, as bought with the price of his blood, and therefore would you glorify him in the one and the other. Nor let any thing be painful to you to exercise yourselves in, where *Jesus* may be glorified, and man benefited, and yet you may rest from your labours. You may rest from all your devouring care, you have a sufficiency in the covenant. There is your righteousness, purity, peace, strength, rest, and life eternal, and all for ever with the Lord, and well secured in all the power and strength of his eternal Godhead. Let your eye and heart be always fixed upon this fulness, that you may be without care. Let this fulness content you, under every apprehension you may have of distress and scarcity in the things which concern your present life. Be always satisfied with the riches of this covenant.

You may rest from all your fear, for greater is he that is for you, then they that are against you. In this covenant all your enemies are put under your feet, nor does there now remain any cause of fear. Here
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may you learn the heart of *Jesus*, by looking to him as your compleat salvation, and by beholding him in this glory, you shall sink into his spirit, whilst all his sacred tempers shall abound in you, if any have been injurious, you shall feel a heart to forgive them, and give glory to God. If you have enemies, as you must of necessity have, if you are in this covenant: you shall feel a heart to love them, yea all mankind, glorifying our Saviour. If you have trials in common life, you shall possess your soul in patience, trusting in *Jesus*. If you have provocations, you shall consider the meek and lowly heart of the crucified Lamb. If you are tempted, you shall endure with fortitude, looking to the author and finisher of your faith. If you are reviled, you shall not revile again, but render good for evil; blessing for cursing, and kindness for bitterness. The rage of your persecutor's spirits, and the sharpness of their tongues, shall not terrify you, you shall be as though you heard them not, with a bowing of the heart before our Saviour, and offering thanksgiving before his pierced feet, for this honour conferred upon you. Nor shall you be discouraged when they accuse you of sin and imperfection, because you are no deceiver, for you never pretended to be any thing in yourself, but a sinner. Learn to abide in the view of the covenant, where your conscience will be always void of offence towards

wards God and man. Let not the poverty, weakness, and shameful bloody form of your Saviour's death, ever make you ashamed, because he is your Lord and God. Nor all the slander, reproach, contempt, and scandal that may be cast upon you for his sake, offend you, where you may be represented as lovers and promoters of sin, because you only will have that man to reign over you. And when you have done and suffered all for the Saviour, with an eye to his spirit and temper in all your conduct and behaviour, remember you are a sinner, retire from it all to his sacred wounds, leave your glory in the dust, and let your glorying be in this, that he has loved you, and given himself for you, and have washed you from his sins in his own blood, Then shall this language be rooted upon your heart: *the Lord has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which is all my hope, and all my salvation.*

F I N I S.

